LOOKING OUT FOR ONE ANOTHER
Public Health at St. Thomas More

Each day we hear more about the spread of the Coronavirus (COVID-19). This is also flu season. Because we care about the health of all our parishioners at St. Thomas More, especially those who are most vulnerable, and after consultation with medical professionals, we are putting forth the following recommendations and implementing the following measures for weekday and Sunday Masses at St. Thomas More:

- If you are feeling sick, please stay home from Mass. You are not required to come to Mass if you are ill.
- Make use of the hand sanitizing stations at the entrance of the church.
- Remember to wash your hands frequently, cover your mouth when coughing and your nose when sneezing.

TEMPORARY LITURGICAL MEASURES:

- BEFORE MASS: When we greet one another before Mass, please simply acknowledge the people near you without shaking hands.
- THE OUR FATHER: The Roman Missal does not make any reference to holding hands during the Our Father. This is more of a local practice at St. Thomas More and other parishes. You are asked to not hold hands during the praying of the Our Father. Your posture during the praying of the Our Father can either be (1) your hands folded in prayer or (2) extended in front of you.
- THE EXCHANGE OF PEACE: A simple nod of the head to those around you is best. Avoid handshakes or fist bumps.
- RECEPTION OF HOLY COMMUNION: We will be suspending the distribution of the Precious Blood at Mass at this time. It is important to note that Christ is fully present in both the species of the Body of Christ and Blood of Christ. Additionally, all parishioners are asked to receive Holy Communion in the hand. This is for the protection of those giving out Communion and others on the Communion line. There are times when a Communion Minister’s hands come in contact with a person’s tongue. This runs the risk of an illness being transmitted to the Communion Minister and the next person who comes to Communion and receives from that Minister. The reception of Communion in the hand is as acceptable and respectful as reception of Communion on the tongue. One is not more reverent than the other. We recognize that this will be a significant change for many who are used to receiving Holy Communion on the tongue, but we respectfully ask that you switch to reception of Communion in the hand out of concern for our Extraordinary Ministers of Holy Communion and other parishioners.

Priests and Deacons will refrain from shaking your hands on the way out of Mass.

We have every intention of returning to our normal Mass practices when it is determined that the health risk has passed.